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(Provisional Agenda item 4(d))

ECE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION, INCLUDING EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION

(Commission decision G (45))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. This report has been prepared in response to operative paragraph 5 of decision G (45).

2. In decision G (45), the Commission:

"1. Urges the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Science and Technology to take a final decision at SAST-18 on the convening in 1990 of an ad hoc expert group meeting to formulate proposals on the follow-up action to the Lisbon Seminar;

2. Welcomes the willingness of the Government of the USSR to submit to the next session of the Senior Advisers a proposal on convening an international symposium on earthquake prediction, monitoring facilities and techniques to promote joint efforts in a co-ordinated way in this area;

3. Calls upon the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning to review its programme of work to identify ways in which it could undertake activities relevant to the tasks of the Decade, in close liasion with the IDNDR secretariat;

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4. Urges the Senior Advisers on Science and Technology to consider the adequacy of existing intergovernmental co-operation in the ECE region on earthquake prediction on the basis of a note prepared by the secretariat;"

3. The secretariat prepared a note (SC.TECH/R.242) for the Senior Advisers on Science and Technology containing suggested topics for the agenda of the ad hoc expert group meeting referred to in operative paragraph 1 of decision G (45). In accordance with operative paragraph 4, the secretariat requested a number of organizations to provide relevant information. In response to that request the United Nations Office of the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC), International Association of Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior (IASPEI) and European Seismological Commission (ESC) provided the secretariat with information which was included in SC.TECH/R.242/Add.1.

4. At their eighteenth session in September 1990, the Senior Advisers considered the above mentioned documents as well as decision G (45) and agreed:

"...

(b) Not to convene the ad hoc meeting in 1990 since delegations did not consider it to be useful;

(c) To request the secretariat:

(i) to transmit to the Council of Europe and to the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction the results of the Lisbon Seminar; and

(ii) to emphasize in its transmission note to these organizations the need for a clear assessment of the work done by the different organizations in this field and the division of labour; and

(d) To consider at SAST-19 the outcome and the results of these consultations on the basis of a Note to be prepared by the secretariat."

(ECE/SC.TECH/39, para. 42)

5. Concerning operative paragraph 2 of decision G (45), the Government of the USSR informed the Senior Advisers that, at the request of the Partly Open Agreement on Predicting and Eliminating Consequences of Natural and Technological Disasters (an organization acting within the framework of the Council of Europe) which will be convening an international conference on the subject, in Strasbourg, in October 1991, it had decided not to host the international symposium.

6. An account of the discussion by the Senior Advisers can be found in the report of their eighteenth session (ECE/SC.TECH/39, paras. 40-41).

7. In response to operative paragraph 3, the Committee on Housing, Building and Planning at its fifty-first session in September 1990 agreed that the Working Party on Building and the Experts on Human Settlements Problems in Southern Europe would consider problems related to construction in seismic regions within the work programme of the Committee. An account of the discussion can be found in the report of its session (ECE/HBP/80, para. 48(e)).

8. In accordance with the decision referred to in paragraph 4(c) above, the Executive Secretary transmitted the Report of the Seminar on the Prediction of Earthquakes held in Lisbon (Portugal) in 1988 to the secretariats of the Council of Europe and International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction emphasizing the need for a clear assessment of the work done by the different organizations in this field and the division of labour. On the basis of responses received the secretariat will prepare a note for the nineteenth session of the Senior Advisers.